

Backcountry Camping Trip Guide

One Night

National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior
Shenandoah National Park
Emergency: 1-800-732-0911



Laurel Prong and Hazeltop

Standard - Circuit

Level: Beginner

Total Length: 7.4 miles

Trip Description: Mountain heights, cascading streams, waterfalls, Rapidan Camp historic site

Entry: 53 MP - Milam Gap

Exit: 53 MP - Milam Gap

Map(s): PATC #10 Central District

Day One

Campsite: Laurel Prong Trail - backcountry

4.1 to 4.6 miles

Find the white-blazed Appalachian Trail (AT) on the south side of Milam Gap parking.

Hike south on the AT 2.6 miles (crossing Skyline Drive almost immediately).

Turn left onto Laurel Prong Trail, hike 1.5 to 2 miles, and find a place to camp.

(Find a place to camp before crossing Fork Mountain Trail, as you may not camp within ½ mile of Rapidan Camp.)

Day Two

2.6 to 3.1 miles

Continue hiking north on Laurel Prong Trail to Rapidan Camp (0.8 to 1.3 additional miles; Laurel Prong totals 2.8 miles).

Explore the area, then find Mill Prong Trail at the northern end of the camp.

Hike up Mill Prong Trail to Milam Gap 1.8 miles (It will be a yellow-blazed horse trail for the first 0.8 mile, then stay left on the blue-blazed trail for the remaining 1.0 mile.)

Notes

Options

If you prefer a short first day, hike this loop in reverse. For a very short first day, you can hike north on the AT 0.25 mile and find a place to dry-camp, then hike the circuit the next day. Total distance will be 8 miles.